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USAID FACT SHEET: RESPONSE TO GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY CRISIS

More than one year since Putin's unprovoked war in Ukraine, the world continues to face an unprecedented food security crisis. The invasion is not only causing immense suffering for the Ukrainian people, but it is also resulting in global food, fuel, and fertilizer shortages and has contributed to historically high food prices. These conditions are exacerbating already high levels of global food insecurity that have resulted from a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate shocks, and protracted conflict and humanitarian crises.

The United States continues to urgently respond to this global crisis to avert a catastrophe and build more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems for the future.

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

- The world is grappling with an unprecedented global food security crisis and vulnerable communities are bearing the brunt of this impact. An estimated 205 million people globally are in dire need of life-saving food assistance and some 768 million people are facing chronic hunger. ([Global Report on Food Crises](#) and [FAO](#))

- More than 900,000 people worldwide are teetering on the edge of famine. ([World Food Program](#)). Women and girls are disproportionately impacted. Globally, 126 million more women than men are food insecure, and that gap is growing. ([FAO](#))
- The Horn of Africa has experienced multiple failed rainy seasons, resulting in the region's worst drought in 70 years and the most severe food security crisis in the world right now. Approximately 23 million people across the region required emergency food assistance to meet basic needs as of the end of 2022. (Source: [United Nations](#))
- **Conflict and violence are the main drivers of hunger and famine.** Conflict is still the biggest driver of hunger, with 70 percent of the world's hungry people living in areas affected by war and violence. ([WFP](#))
- **Today, global food insecurity is higher than ever.** In 2023, an estimated 129 million people are facing crisis or worse levels of food insecurity in the 30 countries that FEWS NET monitors, up from 74 million in 2019. At minimum, this means that at least one in five households have high levels of acute malnutrition in children under five and face hunger-related mortality. (Source: [FEWS NET, Food Assistance Outlook Brief, February 2023](#))
- The historic drought in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, persistent ongoing humanitarian crises, and the added impacts of global food insecurity created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine are rapidly [increasing the number of children suffering from wasting](#). In 2022, [45 million young children around the world were affected by wasting](#), of whom 13.7 million were severely wasted. ([UNICEF](#))

THE U.S. LEADS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL HUNGER

- Since the start of Putin's brutal war in Ukraine, USAID has committed more than **\$14 billion** to respond to the global food security crisis, including more than \$11.5 billion in immediate humanitarian assistance to address food insecurity.
- To address immediate impacts, USAID is providing direct food and nutrition assistance and vital complementary assistance like safe drinking water, health care, and protection for the most vulnerable. At the same time, USAID's development programs are focused on three key components: mitigating the ongoing fertilizer shortage; increasing investments in agricultural capacity and resilience; and, cushioning the impact of macroeconomic shocks on the most vulnerable.
- USAID and its partners scaled up humanitarian assistance for drought response in the Horn of Africa by more than doubling funding commitments from nearly \$806 million in FY 2021 to more than \$1.8 billion in FY 2022. In addition, USAID has provided more than \$1.3 billion in humanitarian assistance since the beginning of FY 2023.
- USAID supported the procurement and transport of 219,000 metric tons of Ukrainian grain to feed people around the world facing the most severe food crises, including in Yemen and Afghanistan.

- In response to the rising global food insecurity, USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) took the extraordinary step in April 2022 to draw down the full balance of \$282 million from the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT). With these funds, USAID procured U.S. food commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in countries already facing severe food insecurity, including Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen.
- To overcome the immediate food security challenges and strengthen food systems to withstand new shocks, [Feed the Future](#)—the U.S. government’s initiative to combat global hunger—is expanding efforts to transform what we grow, how we grow it, and who benefits. Through Feed the Future, the U.S. is addressing the root causes of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition in more than 40 countries, [investing \\$5 billion](#) over five years for global food security and nutrition. This will include \$1 billion in private sector-led projects that strengthen local and regional food systems. In 2022, President Biden announced the expansion of Feed the Future to eight new countries, including those vulnerable to the effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
- In April 2023, Administrator Power announced a new commitment to tackle urgent challenges women are facing in food and water systems while unlocking opportunities for women to advance economically. Generating Resilience and Opportunities for Women (GROW) will enable USAID to deepen and scale its programming to reach, benefit, and empower more women around the world as they, their families, and their communities face worsening climate-driven and food security crises.
- Last year, USAID’s unprecedented contributions to UNICEF allowed an additional 2.4 million children to be treated for severe wasting, and supported a 200 percent increase in procurement of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food in 2023 compared to 2022. Similarly, supplemental funding provided to the World Food Program reached 3.2 million additional women and children with nutrition interventions.
- USAID is working with partners, such as multilateral banks and the private sector, to improve farmers’ ability to obtain and afford agricultural inputs to help farmers use fertilizer more efficiently and small and medium businesses to develop local sources of fertilizer.
- USAID is partnering with regional institutions to support their responses to the food crisis. At the U.S.-Africa Leadership Summit in late 2022, the U.S. and the African Union established a new Strategic Partnership on Food Security and Resilience that leverages everything USAID is doing in Africa to mitigate this crisis and prevent the next one.
- To respond to Russia’s blockade of Black Sea ports and the harm the war has inflicted on Ukrainian agriculture, [USAID established the Agriculture Resilience Initiative - Ukraine \(AGRI-Ukraine\) in July 2022](#) to support Ukraine’s agriculture sector and bolster Ukrainian farmers ability to sustain agriculture exports and alleviate the global food security crisis. We have provided 30% of Ukraine’s registered agriculture enterprises with seeds, fertilizers, crop protection, and services, helping over 13,600 farmers deliver the 2022 harvest and plant winter crops. We have helped hundreds of farmers access nearly \$40 million in grants and loans to keep their farming operations afloat, and keep feeding Ukraine and the world. USAID has contributed \$100 million and has leveraged more than \$200 million in private sector and donor investments to maximize the impact of AGRI-Ukraine.